



# STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
CHARLES M. PALMER, DIRECTOR

## INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 982

**DATE:** February 2, 2011

**TO:** Iowa Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver Providers

**ISSUED BY:** Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

**RE:** Supports Intensity Scale Pilot Project

Iowa is piloting a new standardized assessment tool for individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or other developmental disabilities called the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS). Developed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the SIS is designed to measure the intensity of supports that each person with an intellectual or developmental disability needs in order to fully participate successfully in community life. This pilot project will take place in Boone, Franklin, Hamilton, Humboldt, Madison and Wright counties. It will also be piloted with Money Follows the Person participants and residents of Woodward and Glenwood Resource Centers.

Unlike other assessment tools, the SIS is strengths-based, focusing on the supports a person needs and not the deficits a person has. The SIS covers 84 different categories of support needs. The assessment is completed with the individual as well as at least two people that know the individual well. Recent studies have shown that when the assessment is completed by a trained interviewer, it is a reliable and valid tool. Currently 15 other states use the SIS for individual planning and to assist with systems planning.

The purpose of the Iowa pilot is to collect individual information for supports and needs based planning for both those living in the community as well as those living in facilities. Information collected may also help with analysis of overall service system capacity to support the needs of Iowa's Intellectual Disability population. Utilizing the SIS is one more way to help Iowa comply with the *Olmstead* Supreme Court decision that requires accurate assessment of what an individual needs to live successfully in the community.

Other states with years of experience administering the SIS also use it to assist with resource allocation decisions related to the development of individual plans. As the State of Iowa is just beginning this process, this decision has yet to be made. If Iowa were to decide to use the SIS for this purpose, it would only be after adequate time had passed to develop the expertise necessary to make resource allocation decisions. Updates on this project would be available to stakeholders with opportunities for input before such use.

More information on the Iowa SIS Pilot Project will soon be available at a webpage at [www.ime.state.ia.us](http://www.ime.state.ia.us). The webpage is currently under development. More information on the SIS assessment tool may be found at [www.siswebsite.org](http://www.siswebsite.org). If you have any questions, please contact Brooke Lovelace at 515-256-4637 or [blovela@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:blovela@dhs.state.ia.us).